

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2310

INFO AMEMBASSY KABUL

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 10386

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, AF

SUBJ: PAK-AFGHAN RELATIONS

REF: STATE 235807

SUMMARY: WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE GOP STRATEGY IN DISPUTE WITH AFGHANISTAN IS DESIGNED DISSUADE GOA FROM PRESSING PUSHTUNISTAN CAMPAIGN RATHER THAN CREATING PRETEXT FOR PUNITIVE STRIKE AT AFGHANISTAN. NO SIGNS HERE THAT PAK MILITARY HAS ANY INTEREST IN PICKING FIGHT WITH AFGHANS. DO NOT BELIEVE BHUTTO UNDER ANY ILLUSION USG WOULD SUPPORT MILITARY INITIATIVE AGAINST AFGHANISTAN. WE WONDER, HOWEVER, WHETHER GOA LEADERSHIP AWARE USG POSITION ON PUSHTUNISTAN. END SUMMARY.

1. OUR COMMENTS ON LEWIS/LAINGEN NOVEMBER 19 LETTER ARE CONTAINED IN LETTER FROM INGRAHAM TO LEWIS, COPY OF WHICH BEING POUCHED NEA FOR LAINGEN. SUBSTANCE THESE COMMENTS AS FOLLOWS:

2. WE FULLY SHARE CONCERN EXPRESSED BY LEWIS OVER PRESENT STATE PAK/AFGHAN RELATIONS, RECOGNIZING THAT
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SITUATION IS TICKLISH ONE AND FALSE STEP ON EITHER SIDE

COULD PRECIPITATE CRISIS. WE HAVE THEREFORE REVIEWED WITH SPECIAL CARE QUESTIONS RAISED BY LEWIS: (A) WHETHER PAK ARMY OR GOP IS SEEKING PRETEXT FOR PUNITIVE ATTACK ON AFGHANISTAN, AND (D) WHETHER BHUTTO BELIEVES HE WOULD ENJOY USG SUPPORT IN SUCH AN ADVENTURE.

3. REVIEW CONFIRMS OUR EARLIER ASSESSMENT THAT CALCULATED PAK ATTACK ON AFGHANISTAN MOST UNLIKELY. BHUTTO AND OTHERS IN GOP HIERARCHY ARE ANNOYED AT WHAT THEY SEE AS GOA MEDDLING IN PAKISTAN'S DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE ANY INTENT TO PRECIPITATE FIGHT WITH AFGHANS. TO BEST OUR KNOWLEDGE, GOP STRATEGY (INCLUDING TROOP REDEPLOYMENTS AND BHUTTO'S RECENT VERBAL BARRAGE) IS DESIGNED DISSUADE AFGHANS FROM THEIR COURSE RATHER THAN ESTABLISHING PRETEXT FOR ATTACKING THEM.

4. DEFATT AND ARMA HAVE CONSIDERED CAREFULLY COMMENTS IN LEWIS LETTER, INCLUDING ASSESSMENT BY LOUIS DUPREE. THEY HAVE SEEN NO EVIDENCE ANY APPRECIABLE SENTIMENT IN PAK ARMY OR AIR FORCE FOR MOVE AGAINST AFGHANISTAN TO ERASE HUMILIATION OF 1971 DEFEAT. THEY DO NOT BELIEVE THIS IDEA ENJOYS ANY SUPPORT WHATEVER AMONG LEADERSHIP PAK ARMED FORCES. MOREOVER, ALL INDICATIONS ARE THAT MILITARY REMAINS RESPONSIVE TO BHUTTO'S CONTROL AND WOULD NOT EMBARK ON SUCH ADVENTURE AGAINST HIS WISHES.

5. WITH REGARD BABAR'S CLAIM THAT BHUTTO BELIEVES WE WOULD SUPPORT HIM IN MILITARY ACTION AGAINST AFGHANISTAN, WE HAVE CONSISTENTLY STRESSED TO PRIMIN OUR ABIDING INTEREST IN PEACEFUL RESOLUTION PAK/AFGHAN DISPUTE AND WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE MESSAGE HAS FAILED TO REGISTER WITH BHUTTO. ON OTHER HAND, ALTHOUGH BHUTTO QUITE CERTAINLY KNOWS WE WOULD OPPOSE PAK MILITARY INITIATIVE AGAINST AFGHANISTAN, WE EXPECT HE DOES ASSUME USG ISGENERALLY SYMPATHETIC TO PAK POSITION ON PUSH-TUNISTAN IN VIEW OUR UNQUALIFIED RECOGNITION DURAND LINE AND PRESIDENT NIXON'S STATEMENT IDENTIFYING TERRITORIAL INTEGRITY OF PAKISTAN AS GUIDING PRINCIPLE US FOREIGN POLICY.

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6. OUR OWN CONCERN IS TO SOME EXTENT MIRROR IMAGE OF THAT EXPRESSED BY LEWIS RE BHUTTO. WE CONTINUE TO WONDER WHETHER DAOUD IS FULLY AWARE THAT USG WOULD NOT FAOVR ANY ATTEMPT REDRAW PAK/AFGHAN BORDER WITHOUT FREELY-EXPRESSED CONSENT OF GOP.

7. AS TO SOURCES CITED BY LEWIS, EMBOFFS HERE WHO ARE ACQUAINTED WITH BABAR CONSIDER HIM REASONABLY INTELLIGENT

BUT NOT ESPECIALLY PERCEPTIVE YOUNG MAN, WITH STRONG
PRO-PATHAN SENTIMENTS AND NOT TOO MUCH INSIGHT INTO
CURRENT THINKING IN ISLAMABAD.
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